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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



BACKGROUND

HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious challenges facing the Dominican Republic. Conservative estimates are that 1.1% of the adult population is infected and 50-100,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS, most of who are unaware of their infection. Fueled by sexual transmission, HIV/AIDS is devastating the economically productive-aged population, with a direct impact on the families, children and society at large. As many as 58,000 children 1-14 years of age are at risk of or already orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The impact of the disease varies by geographic region, with infection rates among pregnant women more than 4% in the eastern portion of the island and even higher in some of the border areas with Haiti.

Recent behavior surveillance study showed that stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) continues to be a significant issue. A high percentage of the population does not believe that PLWHAs should continue to work and that students living with HIV should continue to attend school. In addition, health care providers are reluctant to provide care and treatment to this vulnerable population.

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Strengthening HIV/AIDS Services

USAID PRIMARY GOAL: Help the people of the Dominican Republic build and sustain a democratic, well-governed state that responds to the needs of Dominicans, reduces widespread poverty and conducts itself responsibly in the international system

THE PROJECT

Under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID is implementing a project to strengthen HIV/AIDS services in the Dominican Republic. The five-year project will enhance capacity through technical support to the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR). In addition this project will provide technical assistance and grants to civil society organizations for the implementation of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs in Eastern Region and border areas. As a result, people vulnerable to contracting HIV or those already infected will have access to quality and culturally appropriate services that will enable them to adopt a healthier lifestyle, limit the spread of the disease, and reduce its impact on the Dominican population. USAID will:

Strengthen and Support GODR Clinical Services: USAID will support GODR ministries and commissions to implement national programs and policies in coordination with civil society organizations.

Increase Prevention Activities for Most-Affected Populations and Youth: USAID will extend coverage of basic prevention services to those populations with the highest infection rates and enhance age-appropriate life skills programs for in- and out-of-school youth.

Strengthen Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) Programs: USAID will improve the quality and coverage of PMTCT services in high-prevalence areas.

Increase Access to Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT): USAID will ensure that VCT is accessible to the target populations.

Strengthen Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) and Laboratory Services: USAID will strengthen these services through the development and implementation of policies and guidelines, including: quality control systems, training health personnel, and improving patient follow up.

Enhance Home-Based and Palliative Care Services: USAID will extend coverage of these home- and community-based palliative care services.

Increase Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Programs and Services: USAID will team with local organizations to ensure OVC's well-being and access to health, education and other social services.

Support Strengthening of Civil Society Organizations: USAID will provide technical assistance to strengthen organizations' administrative, financial, and management systems as well as their technical capability to provide effective prevention and care services.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

- Increased access to HIV treatment, care and testing services
- Increased technical and administrative capacity of local NGOs working with target populations
- People living with HIV provided quality and accessible care to prevent further spread of the disease
- Increased access to Voluntary Counseling and Testing (via mobile units as well as testing centers) in Region 5 and border areas
- Strengthened relationship between the Government and the civil society services offered to PLWHA
- Increased number and quality of home based care givers in the target regions
- Strengthened laboratory services through quality assurance mechanisms